

§ 7A-409.1. Duties of the State Judicial Council.

(a) The State Judicial Council shall:

- (1) Study the judicial system and report periodically to the Chief Justice on its findings;
- (2) Advise the Chief Justice on priorities for funding;
- (3) Review and advise the Chief Justice on the budget prepared by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts for submission to the General Assembly;
- (4) Study and recommend to the General Assembly the salaries of justices and judges;
- (5) Recommend to the General Assembly changes in the expense allowances, benefits, and other compensation for judicial officials;
- (6) Recommend the creation of judgeships; and
- (7) Advise or assist the Chief Justice, as requested, on any other matter concerning the operation of the courts.

(b) The State Judicial Council, with the assistance of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, shall recommend to the Chief Justice performance standards for all courts and all judicial officials and shall recommend procedures for periodic evaluation of the court system and individual judicial officials and employees. If these standards are implemented by the Chief Justice, the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts shall inform each judicial official of the standards being used to evaluate that official's performance. If implemented, the evaluation of each judge shall include assessments from other judges, litigants, jurors, and attorneys, as well as a self-evaluation by the judge. Summaries of the evaluations of justices and judges shall be made available to the public, in a manner to be determined by the Council, but the data collected in producing the evaluations shall not be a public record.

(c) The State Judicial Council shall study and recommend guidelines for the assignment and management of cases, including the identification of different kinds of cases for different kinds of resolution. If the Chief Justice decides to implement these guidelines, the guidelines may provide that, except for good cause, each civil case subject to assignment to a trial judge should be directed first to an appropriate form of alternative dispute resolution. The guidelines may also provide for posttrial alternative dispute resolution before or as part of an appeal. The guidelines should not require absolute uniformity from district to district and should allow case management personnel within each district the flexibility to direct cases to the most appropriate means of resolution in that district.

(d) The State Judicial Council shall monitor the use of alternative dispute resolution throughout the court system and, with the assistance of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Dispute Resolution Commission, evaluate the effectiveness of those programs.

(e) The State Judicial Council may recommend changes in the boundaries of the judicial districts or divisions.

(f) The State Judicial Council shall monitor the administration of justice and assess the effectiveness of the Judicial Branch in serving the public and to advise the Chief Justice and the General Assembly on changes needed to assist the General Court of Justice in better fulfilling its mission.

(g) The State Judicial Council shall report annually to the Chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety and the Senate Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety, to the Chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, and to the Chief Justice no later than

December 31 regarding the work of the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission and shall include in its report the statistics regarding inquiries and any recommendations for changes. The House of Representatives and the Senate shall refer the report of the State Judicial Council to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety and such other committees as the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall deem appropriate, for their review. (1999-390, s. 1; 2006-184, s. 10; 2010-171, s. 5; 2011-291, s. 2.2; 2014-100, s. 18B.1(h).)